/219 cont./

632 621 [592] When the "mouda^{c}" made up of several hamlets is an active social unit, as happens in most of the valleys of the Haut-Atlas /High Atlas/, the heads of all the households in the hamlets that constitute it deliberate jointly in order to regulate the details of life. But if, according to common practice, the assembly [554] [613] is open to all the men married for a year, only the respected representatives of families, the heads of the "ikhs," make decisions in the name of all.

623 [346] The meetings of the council of the "mouda^{c}," to which the name "jema^{c}t" is often given, are customarily held in the Friday mosque, which is the central institution, and perhaps this social group's reason for being. The turn for feeding the taleb -- a [212] hired outsider who instructs the children in the reading of the [755] Koran, drafts letters or legal documents, and furnishes amulets [358] to cure illnesses -- maintenance of the house of prayer, systematic regulation of the hospitality owed to strangers who come to [574] spend the night in the mosque usually built apart from the village, such are the little practical problems that the assembly must solve in the best interests of all. The "jema^{c}t" augments its activity [185] by watching over the protection of the crops, fixing the [241] successive periods of utilization of the forest of argan trees for [245] pasture or the harvest of the berries; it also sets the time when [624] one can begin the plowing or the harvesting of walnuts (1),

[778] [787] 1. For magical reasons, it is often prohibited by the jema^{c}t to plow before a family that possesses "baraka" has found that circumstances are favorable for beginning the work. Cf. Laoust, Mots et Choses berbères /Berber Words and Things/, pp. 313-315. For other reasons, the harvest of walnuts or olives, which is done [423] on trees belonging in common to a large number of owners, could be done only in the presence of the entire group, and it, too, is regulated by the council.